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C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 002917

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/20/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: FALSE RUMORS OF ABDULLAH'S CABINET LIST

Classified By: Acting PolCouns Victoria Alvarado for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: Afghan politicians are abuzz over rumors that Abdullah has released his cabinet list, although Abdullah's spokesperson has announced that the list did not originate from the Abdullah campaign. Abdullah and many of Abdullah's supposed ministerial picks accuse the Karzai campaign of spreading these false rumors to demonstrate that Abdullah is too Tajik-focused and weak. Many politicians have interpreted these rumors as truth. The rumor mill will continue to run on full speed during this prolonged and contentious presidential elections waiting period. End Summary.

12. (C) Abdullah's spokesperson Sayeed Aqa Hussain Sancharaki, listed as the Higher Education Minister, told us that the list was "political gaming" by the Karzai campaign. He said the list originally surfaced on a Taliban-friendly website, and later was picked up by a Karzai-friendly daily newspaper. He said it was an "absolute fabrication" launched to discredit the Abdullah campaign and make them appear to be weak, since many politicians on the list are considered second-tier, and too Panjshir Tajik focused, as Tajiks comprise a considerable proportion of the list. The so-called Abdullah pick for Foreign Minister, Sayed Ishaq Gailani (Pashtun, Paktika), told us the list was not even worth talking about. On September 16, Abdullah personally confirmed with us that the list is a Karzai camp fabrication meant to discredit him.

13. (C) MP Ahmad Behzad (Tajik, Herat), who is listed as the future Economic Minister, laughed when we asked him about the list. He said "I am not qualified to be a minister," noting that he has never received a college education. He said it was true that many politicians were talking about it, but that most recognized it was a hoax. At an Iftar dinner at the Embassy, however, Senator Rida Azimi (Tajik, Parwan) and MP Fatima Aziz (Tajik, Kunduz), along with a group of female business and civil society leaders, recounted that they, and most other political watchers, took these rumors as truth, since they were announced by Abdullah-supporter MP Malalai Ishaqzai (Pashtun, Kandahar).

14. The following is the list as it appeared on the internet. Note that the "son of Rabbani" is Salahuddin Rabbani, and Registani is Abdullah political advisor Saleh Mohammad Registani. We kept the list in its original form, as it further lends credence to the false nature of the list, as the campaign would never list someone as simply "the son of" someone else.

MOD: Noorulhaq Ulomi
MOI: Said Husain Anwari
FM: Said Ishaq Gailani
IDLG: Atta Mohammad Noor
NDS: Gen. Daoud Daoud
Higher Ed: Fazel Sancharaki

Water and Energy: Rahman Oghlay
Finance: Mustafa Mastoor
Refugees: Siddiqullah Tawhidi
Tribal and Border Affairs: Raz Mohammad Dalili
Information: Abdul Hafiz Mansor
Religious Affairs: Waqef Hakimi
Agriculture: Baryalai Arsalae
Women's Affairs: Shikiba Hashimi
Youth: Fahim Dashti
Public Health: Gulab Ali
Urban Development: Satar Murad
Justice: Registani
Education: Najiba Sharif
Transportation: Daoud Sultanzoy
Mines and Industries: Taj Mohammad Wardak
Commerce: Mohammad Naeem Farahi
Communication: Eng. Asem
Labor and Social Affairs: Malalai Ishaqzai
Economy: Ahmad Behzad
Parliamentary Affairs and the Director General of OAA: Son of
Professor Rabbani

15. (C) Comment: The two leading campaigns continue to jockey for the upper hand in the press, and this supposed Karzai move was probably a political win for Karzai, as many in both the international community and the political scene criticized the list for not having many women, and for being too Tajik-heavy. As the prolonged waiting period continues, we should expect more of these rumors from both sides.
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